

Text Books for Chinese--Big Money for Foreign Publishers. Western Novels Among Celestials--What Missions Are Doing



IN A MANDARIN LAW SCHOOL. A NATIVE DICTIONARY IS NOW IN PRESS.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Shanghai.

One of the problems which China is facing is the making of text-books. A public school system is being established all over the empire. Academies, colleges and universities are being organized, and books are needed for teaching the new learning. When the system is in full swing millions of volumes will be required, and at present there is practically nothing on hand. The old text-books describe the earth as flat, with China covering the most of its surface, and the other countries skirting the edges. The chief studies of the past were the reading and writing Chinese, and the committing to memory the sayings of Confucius and Mencius. To-day the nation wants one scheme of modern education. The government has re-

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四路登商望之像如奔奔官署之外界以邊境茂樹參差珍禽上下兩街交會之處園林

之政府無防禦之固亂黨一呼全城鼎沸君臣相顧不知所歸隨和之聲等於震未

央之宮殿於紅羊巴黎之繁華忽焉已沒華盛頓初創之日宜安福防之機以無跡法

足稱仙都

夫公園之境地宜若在山麓

水隈而不當臨於大道之中

若是則吾不解於華盛頓之

公園也或告之曰華盛頓之

公園蓋防禦之舉於遊觀

之中作京之日法人某館居

美國彼固目視法蘭西大革命

之慘狀而後知防禦之機以無跡法

FROM CARPENTER'S "NORTH AMERICA," PIRATED BY THE CHINESE.

solved that it shall have it, and a compulsory system of schooling is to be generally established. Suppose that to-morrow our President and Congress should enact laws wiping out our public schools, replacing them with others vitally different, with an entire new list of books. That is the situation in China to-day.

Books for Four Hundred Millions.

China, moreover, has four times as many people as the United States. Its children of school age are more than 100,000,000, and in the new scheme the grown-ups as well as the babies are anxious to learn.

There are kindergarten and primary departments for the little ones, there are night schools for civil officials, military schools for the army, and law schools for would-be statesmen. All these are under way, and there are no books to feed them. The situation is one of the strangest in history. It has no counterpart in the past, and will probably have none in the future.

In the meantime books are being imported from a half a dozen different countries. The great school book publishing houses of Great Britain, the United States and Japan are studying the field and are shipping in translations of text-books of one kind and another. The Macmillans of London and New York have published some; the American Book Company and Ginn, of the United States; and as for the Japanese, they are pirating the school books of other nations and sending them here by the ton.

China's Biggest Publishing House.

Up to the present time most of the modern text-books in use have been made by the missionaries. One of the largest presses of the Far East is that of the Presbyterian mission at Shanghai, another of considerable size belongs to the Methodists, and there are a few of other denominations.

The only large secular publishing house which has yet been established to take advantage of new conditions is the Commercial Press, of this city. It was established a little more than ten years ago, with a paid-up capital of three-quarters of a million dollars in silver. It has since grown until it now has a plant covering acres and humming with modern machinery.

I went out to see this establishment last week. It lies within two miles or so of Hongkew Creek. On my way to it I drove past a mile or so of fine foreign residences, with wide porches and galleries about them, by many stores occupied by Chinese, by schools and colleges run by the missionaries, and on out into the country. I was accompanied by one of the managers, and with him went through the various branches of the establishment.

well lighted department I found a dozen Japanese artists working away, and in another was show machines for reducing drawings to any scale. Some of the engravers were cutting out copper plates for new national currency, and others were etching out plates for school book illustrations. I spent some time watching them printing bank notes. The lithographic stones were placed on the presses, and the various colors applied in succession, giving sufficient time between the different impressions for the ink to dry. Where many colors were required the sheets were passed on from press to press, a separate stone being used for each color. This was to avoid wasting time in changing ink, one set of presses being equipped with red, another with green and others with blue, yellow or black.

China's New Alphabet.

Our alphabet has only twenty-six letters, and the characters used by our printers are comparatively few. The classic Chinese has many thousand characters, and in the simplest of the schoolbooks several thousand are used. In the Chinese now in use every character expresses a word; the language is idiographic--that is, it is written in words, rather than letters and syllables. Chinese alphabets have been formed and a new system of writing inaugurated.

At present all penmanship is with a brush and India ink, the brush being held almost perpendicular. About 2,000 years ago the people had a penmanship based upon curved lines, but this was difficult to produce by the

brush, and it was practically abolished. Metal pens and fluid inks will now be brought in, and the old curves will come into use. This will practically kill the brush pen and ink business, and a great industry will go to the wall.

The new alphabet is to have fifty letters. With its different system of printing and writing will come into being, and the probability is that the typewriter will be so adapted to the new system that it will come into use.

In the Casting Room.

At present every character employed in the printing house has to have its own matrix and be cast separately, and the characters are so delicate that they must be new in order to do good work. In the composing room I visited a few different sizes of type were employed, and of these more than 8,000 characters of each style are kept on hand. This necessitates the making of 50,000 different characters, each of which must have its own matrix, or die, in the shape of a brass type from a quarter to a half-inch square and an inch long. This die is fitted into a casting box, and by turning a crank the type is turned out at the rate of twenty or thirty a minute. A score or so of such machines were busy at the time I went through the stereotyping department, and their clicking made as much noise as so many corn shellers.

In an adjoining room I was shown the matrices of the books already published. They filled the shelves which walled the sides of a large room from floor to ceiling. Another room was devoted to storing electrotype plates, everything being catalogued and as systematically arranged as in one of our modern printing offices at home.

In the composing room each printer stood in a little alcove walled with cases, and he usually had a boy to run and fetch the types from other parts of the room.

With the Blindery Girls.

I next went into the binding department and spent some time there watching the girls. There were hundreds of them, dressed in long blue coats and wide trousers, with bands of black silk over their oily black hair. They sat at tables with their hands on their knees, their feet touching the floor. They worked so busily that I remarked upon it, whereupon the manager, who acted as our guide, said:

"We pay them by piecework, and they have no time to waste."

I asked as to their wages. The man replied:

"They are making much money for them! Some of the best earn \$1 Mexican per week, or about \$3 in gold. The average workman is paid about \$2.50."

These girls were stitching and sewing, folding and pasting, and also feeding the presses. Their hours were about twelve per day. The department contained much modern machinery, and the work of binding was economically done.

The Celestial Book Pirates.

China has no copyright law. I found the Commercial Press stealing everything that its managers think of value for the new Chinese schools. No matter what the copyrights are, foreign authors must be content with his hope that their books may do good, even though they do not add to their financial receipts. As I looked over the volumes printed by this company for the new education, I found many well known American text-books, which have been translated into Chinese.

I saw also stacks of my own "Geographic Readers," published on cheap paper, with admirable illustrations. I was told the whole series had been printed for the press, and that my books on North America and Europe were already in use. The matter has been translated by the English-Chinese Press, and as far as possible, verbatim, but how correctly only those who can read the Chinese text-books can know.

As I looked at my books the manager of the company said they sold well and that he expected to get a good revenue from Carpenter's "Asia." There was the reason for their employment. As a rule, they are not thorough, and the probability is that they will eventually be replaced by American or Englishmen or Germans. I look for the steady increase in the number of American teachers. There are hundreds of Chinese now studying in the United States, and there are many American-Chinese graduates in China. All of these have a high regard for our methods of education, and they would favor the selection of our school books as leaders for the new schools.

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乾射視

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乾入池視

拭白粉

拭黑粉

持粉筆

持粉筆

PAGE FROM A CHINESE PRIMER.

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printed charts of the Chinese provinces, with the principal industries and resources marked upon them, and have inaugurated new methods of teaching the people. Indeed, the work which the missionaries have done cannot be overestimated, and the situation here just now is such that money spent upon missions will return a thousand-fold.

A Carnegie of China.

In this connection, a bright woman clerk of the mission bookstore of Shanghai said to me to-day:

"What China needs more than anything else is a system of circulating libraries, which shall contain the simplest books of our modern literature, including the Scriptures, concordances and the western classics. These people are pinching the new learning, but they are miserably poor and cannot afford to buy books. The Chinese women want them. In every community club are already established, where the women come together weekly or daily to gossip and talk. If they could have such books they would be read aloud at these meetings, and a great educational movement might be instituted. As to the Chinese translations, they are cheap. The concordance of the Scriptures costs less than 20 cents, and the new books of any kind that sell as high as a dollar."

I cite this conversation as a suggestion for some rich American who would like to be known as the Carnegie of China.

New Chinese Literature.

The inauguration of the new school system and the new civilization is bringing in translations of the most popular books of the Western World. To-day 221 novels, originally written in English, French or German, are in circulation. They have been translated into Chinese, and the demand for them is increasing. In one year fifty-seven such novels were issued. They include translations of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "The Arabian Nights," "The Moon," and Charles Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare." One of the most popular of the new issues is Conan Doyle's "Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes," and another is "Robinson Crusoe." Among translations from the French are "Les Misérables" and "Manon Lescaut," and the most popular of all is "The Three Musketeers," and other novels of Mr. Walter Scott. These works are published on cheap paper; they are sold by booksellers in the various cities, some bringing as little as 10 cents a piece, and the recent translations of this nation sold to the extent of 400,000 copies, and that within a year; another had a circulation of 155,000 copies within eighteen months.

In addition to novels, some heavy works, such as Darwin's "Origin of Species," Spencer's "Evolution," and Mill's "Essay on Liberty," are being published, and the new movement has created a demand for treatises on politics and parliamentary law.

Dr. C. D. Tenney, formerly head of the Chinese University at Tientsin, and now in charge of the Chinese Education at Peking, has published a number of school books, which are in general use, including readers, primers and geographies, and Mr. Wylie, of the London Mission, has prepared a complete series of textbooks and mathematics in the Chinese for the Japanese translators.

A large number of the new translations come from the Japanese. The written languages of Japan and China are somewhat similar, and the Japanese scholar learns quickly to speak, and to write, the Chinese. The Commercial Press editorial-room has a large number of Japanese men employed as translators, and I find Japanese teachers in all the Chinese educational centers. Much of the school furniture has been made in Japan, and a large number of the modern maps and charts.

The Japanese teachers will work for lower salaries than other foreigners, and this is one reason for their employment. As a rule, they are not thorough, and the probability is that they will eventually be replaced by American or Englishmen or Germans. I look for the steady increase in the number of American teachers. There are hundreds of Chinese now studying in the United States, and there are many American-Chinese graduates in China. All of these have a high regard for our methods of education, and they would favor the selection of our school books as leaders for the new schools.

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